

REMARKS

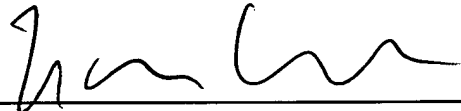
Claims 2, 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 17-50 were pending in this application when the present Office Action was mailed (December 28, 2004). Claim 2 has been cancelled and claims 51-56 have been added. Accordingly, claims 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 17-56 are currently pending.

In the December 28, 2004 Office Action, all the claims were allowed except claim 2 which was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Published Application No. US2002/0091419 in light of U.S. Patent No. 6,665,562. Without commenting on or conceding the merits of this rejection, and without prejudice to pursuing claim 2 in a continuation or other application, claim 2 has been cancelled from the present application. Claims 51-56 have been added to depend from claims already indicated to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the cited art. The applicant accordingly requests reconsideration of the application and a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call John M. Wechkin at (206) 359-3257.

Respectfully submitted,

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